

This week's community profile: Kunesh

Give a wave when you drive by

By Casey Cain

Press-Gazette

Kunesh may be short on things to do, but it's long on pride.

"Everyone is super nice," says new resident June Mayhew, 59, of 2914 Kunesh North Road. "In the summer, we sit on the front porch, and everybody who goes by waves."

Kunesh, a community of about 27 people in northern Brown County, has few landmarks. The two cheese factories, grocery store, auto repair shop, tavern, grade school and church are gone.

Press-Gazette photos by Ken Behrend "There's nothing to come here for," says

George Blohowiak, 65, 5197 Kunesh West Road. "When it had a church, the store, the tavern, that's when it had a corner on the world."

Still, Kunesh has a lot going for it, residents say.

It is within sight of Wisconsin 29, but it remains quiet and peaceful, according to George's wife, Hazel Blohowiak, 63. And the neighbors are close.

"You can get out and walk around, and make wood," says Edward Dudek, 68, 3268 Kunesh North Road. "And you've got some good people, good neighbors."

Dudek and his wife, Vurl, 67, have traveled extensively but haven't been lured permanently away. "We're always glad to get home," Vurl says.

Aside from a man who was shot while trying to break into a garage in the 1930s, criminals have left the area alone.

"Not much happens out here, which is good," George Blohowiak said.

June Mayhew and her husband, Earl, 61, moved to Kunesh three years ago. She has become a cheerleader for the area.

"It's a very, very friendly community," said Mayhew, who lives in the former Peace Lutheran Church parsonage with her husband and one of their three sons.

The Mayhews lived in Milwaukee until 1973, then in Ashwaubenon until 1988. People in Kunesh are the friendliest, she says: "Even though we had really nice neighbors where we lived before, and a lot of friends and everything, it's just different out here."

While there isn't much in the way of organized social activity here, residents say Kunesh is unlikely to die out.

"I think we're close enough to everything to not ever have that happen," says Hazel Blohowiak.

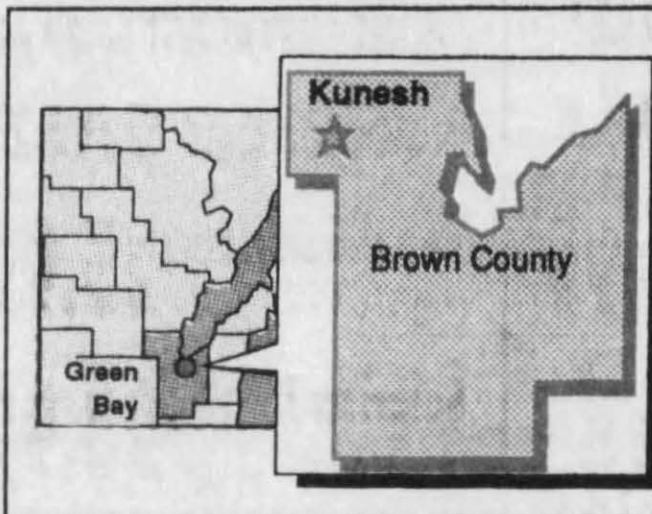
"It's only six miles to Pulaski and 11 miles to Green Bay," her husband agrees. "In a car today, that don't mean nothing."

Most residents commute to Green Bay and Pulaski to work rather than relying on farming.

The community was predominantly German when it was settled in the late 1800s. Peace Lutheran Church, then in Kunesh, held services in German until the 1930s. The area has since lost its German character, but gained families from Belgian, Scandinavian, Polish and other cultures.



Caretakers: George and Hazel Blohowiak examine one of the oldest headstones in the Kunesh Cemetery.



The Kunesh file

- ☐ **Population:** About 27.
- ☐ **Business:** Industrial Engraving and Manufacturing Corp., which produces embossing rolls and converting equipment; Printco Industries, which builds and retrofits printing presses and related equipment; Richard Williams Nursery, shrubbery.
- ☐ **Location:** Town of Pittsfield, at Brown County U and Kunesh West Road.

Most Kunesh residents have lived in the area for many years.

Blohowiaks take care of the Kunesh cemetery, which dates back to the early 1880s. It was carved out of the Stender farm, one of the first in the Kunesh area, and handed down through Hazel's family for several generations.

The two met while attending the Kunesh School, built in 1849 on Kunesh Road North. It is now the Pittsfield Town Hall.

Vurl Dudek's grandfather, August Fiebelkorn, immigrated from Germany and owned a grocery store in Kunesh in the late 1800s.

But there are new homes going up to the north. There is even some feeling that with so many people moving in, it's difficult to get to know them all.

"Before, we knew everybody in the whole area," said Edward Dudek. "Now, with all these houses going up north of us, people drive by and wave, and we don't know who they are."

But the feeling of the community remains unchanged.

After all, they still wave.

Next week: Stangelville in Kewaunee County



Relaxing: June Mayhew and dog, Muffin watch a seahorse in her son's fish tank.



Playing for fun: Vurl Dudek enjoys a game of 500 Rummy with her husband, Edward (background).